

The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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BALFOUR'S PLUM FOR THE PARSONS.

MR. BALFOUR, the Tory leader in the House of Commons, is the author of a book called *The Foundations of Belief*. The object of that book is to demonstrate that nothing can be known, that Christianity is therefore as likely to be true as anything else, and that, being in possession of the field, it is entitled to support as the embodiment of faith and authority.

Mr. Balfour's uncle, Lord Salisbury, is Prime Minister of this country—perhaps we ought to say of this empire. This gentleman once said that the Church of England was an institution for the promotion of righteousness. No doubt it is so from Lord Salisbury's point of view. He is a peer, a great landlord, and the leader of the Tory party. It is natural that he should regard the interests of his class as identical with those of the nation. It is also natural that he should regard the Church of England, which is the great spiritual support of those interests, as a most divine establishment.

The Government of Lord Salisbury and Mr. Balfour is bound to do its best to promote the welfare of religion in general, and of the Church of England in particular. Now the welfare of that Church, as a business institution, depends upon its influence over the minds of the young. The plea put forward is that children must be taught religion, or they will grow up immoral; but teaching them religion, in Church of England schools, means filling them with the idea of the sanctity and authority of the Church itself; and thus, under specious pretences, the Established Church is cunningly striving to maintain its professional interests.

Owing to the immense advantage with which it starts, in the enjoyment of revenues amounting to many millions a year, arising from endowments that really belong to the nation, and only belonging to the parsons by virtue of definite Acts of Parliament, the Church of England was able to nearly monopolise what are called "the voluntary schools" of England. These "voluntary" schools are really "denominational" schools, and should be plainly called so. They are built and managed by religious bodies, who also make a small, and ever-decreasing, contribution towards their maintenance. But the overwhelming proportion of the annual cost of such schools is borne by the general taxpayer, who may belong to any form of religion or to no religion at all. Broadly speaking, there are two kinds of elementary schools under the Education Act—namely, Board schools, supported partly by rates and partly by taxes; and Denominational schools, supported to a small extent by voluntary contributions, but mainly by taxes from the imperial exchequer. The Board schools are under the control of the ratepayers, while the Denominational schools are under the control of religious bodies. And, as we said before, the Church of England, owing to its favorable position, controls the vast majority of those Denominational schools, which are nurseries for the production of future members of that Establishment.

Under existing conditions, it is impossible to benefit the Church of England by "voluntary school" legislation without also benefiting the Roman Catholic Church, which ranks next to the Establishment, though a long way behind it, in the number of its schools and the amount of its subsidy. But this has long ceased to be an objection. There has for some time been a very good understanding between the leaders of the Church of England and the leaders of the Church of Rome; witness the curious correspondence between Cardinal Vaughan and the Bishop of Chester. Both of these Churches are well aware that they have a common enemy, and that, while they are threatened by it, they are bound by the plainest dictates of common sense to act as far as possible together. Besides, there is no longer a feud between Catholic and Protestant among the "upper classes." Their worldly interests are reconciled, and these always predominate in the long run. The mob fight about religion when their prejudices are stirred up for that purpose, but the "upper classes" never fight except for a substantial object. They may affect religious bigotry, but they are always animated by a more personal motive. What they are really after is to maintain and increase their hold on the good things of this life.

The Education Bill of last year, which we criticized at considerable length, was withdrawn on account of the great opposition it encountered. Mr. Balfour promised, however, that something would be done early in the new year for the poor oppressed "voluntary" schools. That promise is now being redeemed. Mr. Balfour proposes to give a fresh grant of £600,000 a year to these schools, and to exempt them from all local rates, which are to a considerable extent payable by the Board schools. We need not deal at present with the other features of Mr. Balfour's scheme, although we may have something to say about them on a future occasion. Nothing is to be done, except in the way of vague promises for distressed Board schools. The case is simply this. Something had to be done for the Church of England, in return for its continued support of the Tory government; and Mr. Balfour says, "Here is £600,000. It is all I can do for you at present, but more than I offered last year. Later on we may dip our hands still deeper for you into the pockets of John Bull."

This is the real sum and substance of Mr. Balfour's proposal. It is a gift of £600,000 a year to the Church of England, subject to a deduction in the shape of a sop to the Roman Catholic Church. The parsons will have (say) half a million a year—"for ever," Mr. Balfour says—to aid them in supporting their schools as recruiting grounds for their churches. Such is the "deal" which is being worked under the very noses of the English people. If they stand this they will stand anything. They will walk into servitude with their eyes open. They will actually pay for their own oppression. And the worst of it is that they seem likely to fall easy victims to the greed and cunning of their exploiters. Yet there are critics who tell us that the time is past for fighting theology and priestcraft!

G. W. FOOTE.

PIONEERS OF EVOLUTION.*

EVOLUTION is the keynote to the thought of the age, and in writing an account of the *Pioneers of Evolution, from Thales to Huxley*, Mr. Clodd has rendered an important contribution towards the history of human development. Like his previous works on *The Childhood of the World*, *The Childhood of Religions*, *The Story of Creation*, *Primitive Man*, etc., Mr. Clodd's latest work is painstaking, and eminently serviceable to the cause of advanced thought. This book, as I shall have occasion to show, is in particular worthy of the attention of all Freethinkers, for it not only lucidly shows the scientific view, but it brings home to Christianity the charge of having stood in the way of the advance of knowledge and arrested its development.

The speculations which made the theory of evolution possible are at least twenty-five years old. They may probably be found yet earlier in Hindu philosophy, especially in the Sankhya system of Kapila, which lies at the root of Buddhism and Jainism. Mr. Clodd does not enter into this perhaps debatable matter, but takes us first to Greece, where, as everyone knows, Thales, the father of Greek philosophy, held that all things arose from water. His pupil, Anaximander, asserted the origin of life from the non-living, and spoke of man as "like another animal—namely, a fish in the beginning." Xenophanes, too, was a bold thinker, who noted how man made his gods in his own image. Mr. Clodd traces the course of thought to Leucippus and Democritus, who propounded an atomic theory which links Greek cosmology with early nineteenth-century science. Then came the great name of Aristotle, with his insistence on observation, his assertion of order, and his anticipation of modern science in holding that germs were produced before animals.

Perhaps the greatest of the old Greek philosophers was Epicurus, who taught the very foundation of modern philosophy, the relativity of knowledge, and who rejected mysticism and all pretensions to knowledge of the absolute, accepted the atomic theory, and applied it all round.† The followers of Epicurus practised brotherhood before the Christians taught it. Cicero has left it on record that the Epicureans had one to another the most unselfish sentiments.

Our knowledge of the system of Epicurus is largely derived from the *De Rerum Natura* of Lucretius. Lucretius believed in but one god. That god was Epicurus. Both sages sought to deliver men from the terrors of superstitions. With the renunciation of vain hopes and fears came something like a true conception of man and his position in the universe. Lucretius taught the atomic theory, which dispensed with the idea that the phenomena of nature were dependent on the will of the gods; and, tracing the evolution of things, he showed the primitive savagery of the human race, and the origin of the belief in a soul and a future life, from the dreams of ghosts of savages.

It is only by knowing man's past that a true estimate concerning him can be formed, and it has been the demerit of all theologies and metaphysics that they have either had a totally false conception of this past or left it out of account. Before the Christian era the ancient philosophers had arrived at such truths as that there is a primary substance which abides amid the flux of things; that out of nothing nothing comes; that the primary substance is indestructible; that the universe is made up of atoms, whose combinations, ruled by affinities, result in the variety of things; that life arose out of non-living matter, plants coming before animals, and man last, his early state being one of savagery, his first tools and weapons of stone, then after the discovery of metals, of copper, and following that of iron. His body and soul are alike compounded of atoms, and the soul is extinguished at death. Mr. Clodd shows all this is paralleled by the researches of modern science; and then comes the question, Whence came the long arrest of scientific thought? There is but one answer, and Mr. Clodd gives it plainly: "The attitude of the early Christians towards all mundane affairs as of no moment compared with those affecting their souls' salvation; the assumed authority of scripture as a full revelation of both

earthly and heavenly things, and the assumed infallibility of the words of Jesus reported therein, suffice to explain why the great movement towards discovery of the orderly relations of phenomena was arrested for centuries, and theories of capricious government of the universe sheltered and upheld." Mr. Clodd, it will be seen, does not mince the matter. I should state it, if possible, yet more roundly. Christianity and science were incompatible. The clearest of Christ's teachings was, that he was shortly to come and dissolve the fabric of this world. Why care for its welfare when a new order of things was so imminent? Soon would all its glories be rolled away like a scroll when the Lord came in flaming fire, gathering his elect from the four winds, and taking vengeance on those who knew him not.

The natural effects of the compound of fanaticism and charlatantry, which spread under the banner of the Cross, was the arrest of civilization. Rome fell when her soldiery became converted, and bands of monks destroyed temples, statues, and manuscripts, regarding heathen art and learning but as works of the Devil. The indisputably historic fact that the triumph of Christianity was followed by ten centuries of the Dark Ages is evidence that in its earlier and more genuine form it was rather a curse than a blessing to mankind.

But I have somewhat departed from Mr. Clodd's text, to which I must return. In the meantime, I commend his work to the notice of all my readers.

J. M. WHEELER.

(To be continued.)

CHRISTIAN MISSIONS A DELUSION AND A FAILURE.

THAT professed Christians have failed to incorporate their teachings in the daily conduct of the masses at home has been amply proved again and again in these columns. Moreover, the failure has been practically acknowledged by Christians themselves in their repeated lamentations of non-success, and also in the new methods of advocacy they now adopt. Such theological trump cards as "human depravity," "the blood of the lamb," and "hell fire" are no longer relied upon by intelligent believers to win the game of Christian salvation; these are discarded, and the secular agencies, such as superior singing, refined music, and social gatherings, have taken their place.

Our present purpose, however, is not to deal with this phase of Christian propaganda, but rather to examine the pretensions set up on behalf of what are termed "Foreign Missions," which, in our opinion, are among the principal deceptions fostered by the orthodox party. It is claimed that not only did Christ authorize the missionary enterprise, but that the presence of Christian missionaries is an advantage to the "heathen," tending to their religious, moral, and intellectual elevation. A greater delusion has seldom been promulgated, as all impartial testimony proves; and we hope to show from undoubted authorities that this missionary interference is based upon arrogance and self-assumed superiority, and that it has proved a decided fiasco both in its theological and civilizing objects.

The supposed command from Christ which is said to sanction the missionary enterprise is found in that admittedly spurious passage which reads: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark xvi. 15). But it is evident from another command, attributed to the same person, that he did not intend that "all the world should be preached to; for, when he sent forth his twelve disciples upon a mission of propaganda, they were told not "to go into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not" (Matthew x. 5). Besides, missionaries to-day never attempt to follow the instructions Christ is reported to have given to those he sent forth. They were commanded to "provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor script for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves" (Matthew x. 9, 10). Now, precious few of the "self-denying" missionaries at the present time would start upon the "Lord's mission" under such circumstances. On the contrary, they insist upon having not only plenty of money, but, as we shall see presently, other articles of a most dangerous and brutal kind. Therefore, so far as Christ is

* *Pioneers of Evolution, from Thales to Huxley*; with an intermediate chapter on the Causes of Arrest of the Movement. By Edward Clodd. (London: Grant Richards, 9 Henrietta-street, W.C.; 1897.) 5s.

† On Epicurus and his philosophy see *A Few Days in Athens*.

concerned, there is no authority for this sham and delusion termed "Foreign Missions." He never intended, if the Gospels are correct, that his faith should be universal; hence we read: "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew xv. 24); "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me" (John xvii. 9); "Many are called, but few are chosen" (Matthew xxii. 14).

Apart, however, from Christ and the New Testament, no one religion can become universal, and thus we find so many different religions in the world. The kind of faith that is professed depends upon temperament, climate, and general environment. But from its very nature Christianity is certainly not calculated to command universal adherence. It, like Judaism, is too exclusive, doctrinal, and impractical. Hence, the author of *Conquests of the Cross* admits "that out of the total population of the world [estimated at about 1,470,000,000] little more than four hundred millions are Christians even in name, including Protestant, Greek, and Roman Catholic Churches, and that consequently over one thousand millions of our fellow creatures are non-Christian" (p. 543). And this, be it observed, after the faith has had a history of two thousand years. Surely it is necessary that such a vain effort, as the attempt to Christianize the world has proved to be, should cease, and that the energy, time, and money which have hitherto been spent in this useless enterprise should be devoted to some practical purpose.

It is not here denied that in some instances improvement has followed the sojourn of missionaries among certain tribes; but the change for the better thus effected has not been the result of the Christian religion; it has been in consequence of the adoption of secular agencies. Thus the Rev. Dr. Ellinwood, secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions (U.S.A.), writes: "Secular enterprise has built the great Christian cities of the Western hemisphere and opened mission-fields everywhere in the chief islands of the sea. The California of to-day could not have been created by missionary effort alone; and the magnificent spectacle of a British Empire in Southern Asia, with its Bible, its schools and colleges, its law and order, its manifold enlightenment and moral elevation, could not have existed but for the long and sometimes questionable career of the East India Company" (*ibid.*, 520). This corroborates Buckle's view, that "the religion of mankind is the effect of their improvement, not the cause of it."

Contrasting the blighting and pernicious influence of "Foreign Missions" upon their unwilling victims with the little good which has followed, not, be it observed, the religion of the missionaries, but, as the writer just mentioned puts it, the "stimulating his [the savage's] intellect," what a sad and degrading picture is presented to us! The English missionary, James Gilmour, thus writes of certain missionaries: "They have their work constantly before their eyes; they are not blind, and know well enough how to take very good care of themselves. For many years past they have seen the consequences which their civilization and Christianity have exercised on the heathen races. The Indians have gradually disappeared from the face of the earth; great stone churches have been built, and their burial places have been filled with the bodies of the new Christians. Like a pestilence have these new manners and customs raged among them; but the land became valuable; cities and villages arose, the Europeans established plantations and became rich; the Indians were driven to work, and either became slaves of the white man or were pushed back further and further, until they found a quiet place where they could die" (quoted by Frederick Gerhard in his *Coming Creed of the World*, p. 129).

Not long since, Cassell and Co. published a work in the interest of Christian missions, entitled *Conquests of the Cross*, to which we have referred above. We quote a few extracts from this book because they afford, from a Christian source, evidence of the evil effects which have accompanied and followed the missionary failure: "The British vessels which bring out missionaries and Bibles to evangelize Africa, bring also, and in far greater number, Enfields and breechloaders, which convert the continent into a hell" (p. 523). Referring to New Zealand, we read: "Thus does England continue to supply the Maori, as she has ever done since she made his acquaintance, with the poison and the antidote—first gunpowder and the Bible, and now whisky and the blue ribbon.....the Pakeha set his fatal foot on their shores, and introduced alongside his heavenly

message loathsome vices entailing disease and death" (pp. 95, 97). Speaking of "the pernicious liquor traffic that has been carried on under the flags of Christian nations," the Rev. W. Allen, M.A., of the Church Missionary Society, gives the following details: "The figures, as I ascertained them from the Custom House authorities at Sierra Leone, were sad enough, amounting to over 180,000 gallons in the year 1887, besides incalculable quantities entering the country to the north, duty free. But they are far worse in the Lagos colony, for the Hon. and Rev. James Johnson, who is a member of the Government and speaks with authority, has declared that the liquor imported into that colony amounts to 1,230,000 gallons annually. Frightful as that quantity is, it is far from surprising to one who has been in the interior, for during the eighteen days I spent in Lagos, on the river Ogun, and in Abbeokuta, gin and rum, or the cases and bottles which contained them, were constantly before my eyes. Large liquor-laden steamers lying at anchor; warehouses filled to repletion with liquid fire. I was told by one of the principal trading agents at Brass that 60,000 cases of gin, and half that quantity of rum, pass through Brass annually into the Niger territory; and he thought a still larger quantity through Akassa.....An English trader on the Manah River, to the west of Liberia, told me that he himself sold 1,000 gallons of spirits to the natives every week" (pp. 521-2).

This is a specimen of how Christian missionaries seek to introduce and to spread the "pure gospel" among the "poor heathens." For this the poor at home are deprived of money that should be used to save them from starvation; for this young children are deluded and made to subscribe to the missionary-box; for this a gigantic system of misrepresentation is maintained; and for this truth and justice are sacrificed, in order to perpetuate one of the most glaring and fraudulent superstitions that ever disgraced the annals of human history.

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

AMEN.

THERE is reason for believing that when good Christians draw out "Amen" at the end of their stupid prayers they are unwittingly invoking the name of an Egyptian deity, the god Amen, whose name, like that of אֱמֵן, was a solemn and mysterious one, just as when they bow to the East they continue sun-worship.

In the fine hymn to Amen-Ra, which Mr. Goodwin contributed to the second volume of *Records of the Past*, he is thus invoked:—

"Ra adored in Aptu, high crowned in the house of the obelisk: King Ani, Lord of the new moon festival: to whom the sixth and seventh days are festivals sacred: Sovereign of life, health, and strength, Lord of all the gods: who art visible in the midst of the heaven: ruler of men.....whose name is hidden from his creatures; in his name which is Amen."

The name "Amen" in Egyptian means secret, sacred, or hidden. It is a component part of the word "Amenti," the Egyptian Sheol or Hades. Of this Amen we are told in the same hymn that he is "The One maker of existences.....The One alone with many hands; lying awake while all men lie asleep, to seek out the good of his creatures."

We know from the Tell-el-Amarna tablets that the Egyptians possessed Palestine long before Moses; while the Harris Papyrus assures us that "Rameses erected in Philistia a Ramesseum to Amen in the city of Kanaan; a statue of the god was set up in its holies in the name of the king." Here is record that the worship of Amen was established in Palestine in the time of Rameses, where also we find traces of Egyptian worship as late as the third century B.C.*

Moses, the traditional lawgiver of the Jews, is said to have been brought up in the worship of Amen, which worship lasted till Greco-Roman times, being incorporated in that of Jupiter-Ammon.

Major-General Forlong, in his *Rivers of Life*, vol. i., p. 466, says:—

"The Egyptians called the great creator by such names as.....Aum, Am, and Am On—that is, the

* *Palestine Exploration Quarterly Statement*, April, 1892, p. 173.

sun in fertilizing heat, whose representative was the lingam. From *Aum* comes our *Amen*, the Hebrew *Aman*, a name given to Jehovah or Christ when rebuking those who are neither hot nor cold (Rev. i. 18; iii. 14)."

The esoteric meaning of *Amen* is found in Rosenroth's *Kabbalah Denudata*, vol. i., p. 129, where it is identified with *Jesod*. The orthodox Rabbis, taking each letter for a word, say it means "God the Faithful King."

It is curious that *AUM* is the sacred word of both Brahmans and Buddhists. Selig Korn, an able Jewish mythographer, who wrote under the name of Felix Nork, saw in this a proof of an underlying identity. This, in my judgment, is very dubious. Godfrey Higgins, too, in his learned, but rather out-of-date, *Anacalypsis*, goes largely into the connections of *Aum*, *Om*, *On*, etc., which deserve to be retraced in the light of modern philology.

It seems likely that the name of *Amen* came in as an oath among the Jews just because the name of *Jahveh* was prohibited; and the use of *Adonai* and *Shaddai* was equally forbidden. *Jahveh* himself swore frequently "in his wrath." In Isaiah lxx. 16 our dishonest version says: "He that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth." It should be, as the more honest Douay says, "by the God *Amen*." In Hebrew, *Amen* is now represented as standing for what is safe and secure. The rendering, "so be it," is a tolerable approximation. But its early use, like its latest, is that of an exclamation. This makes it a mystery-word. *Benaiah*, after receiving instructions about the coronation of *Solomon*, replies: "Amen! *Jahveh*! God of my lord the king say so too!" (1 Kings i. 36). So *Jeremiah* says to *Hananiah*: "Amen! *Jahveh* do so" (*Jeremiah* xxvii. 6). The *Deuteronomist* makes "all the people" say "Amen" to the recital of the twelve curses (*Deut.* xxvii. 15-26). *Nehemiah* (v. 13) says the congregation pledged itself by a solemn *Amen*, or oath. The mystical word was doubled in the formula for the poor suspected wife who had to drink the water of jealousy (*Numbers* v. 22);* and also in that with which the people solemnly accept the priestly law (*Nehemiah* viii. 6; see 1 *Chronicles* xvi. 36). We note in these instances that to invoke the sacred name was in the nature of an oath. "Let all the people say *Amen*" (*Psalms* cvi. 48) evidently means let them ratify it by a solemn appeal to the most sacred name.

Jesus, who says "Swear not at all," was thus continually swearing, since in all the passages translated "verily" it is the word *Αμην* which is used in the Greek. *John*, as "*Abraham*" has recently pointed out (*Freethinker*, p. 53), always doubles the formula, which the *Synoptics* keep single. He has *Amen*, *Amen*, twenty-five times; they keep it single fifty-two times. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, the cock shall not crow till thou hast denied me thrice" (*John* xiii. 38), put into the vernacular, would be "Swelp me bob," or "I call God to witness." In 2 *Corinthians* i. 20 *Paul* says: "For how many soever be the promises of God, in him is the yea; wherefore through him is the *Amen*, for glory unto God by us." The real meaning of this "clotted bosh" is, that *Christ* is the ratification of the promises. When in the *Apocalypse* he is called "*Amen*" (iii. 14) it means, as the following words show, "the faithful and true witness." The conclusion I draw from the continuance of this most ancient mystery-word in Christian liturgies is, that the Christian Church assimilated not only much of Judaism, but also remnants of the yet earlier Egyptian cult. *Amen*.
LUCIANUS.

THE CREDIBILITY OF THE GOSPELS.

THE MATTER COMMON TO THE SYNOPTICS.

ONE of the many proofs of the non-independence of the narratives in the *Synoptics* is to be found in the arrangement of the circumstances recorded in two or in three of those Gospels. In considering this matter, it must be borne in mind that there were no written Gospels in *Paul's* day, nor, as far as we know, in the first century at all. Christian apologists, it is true, have the audacity to assert that the *Synoptics* were certainly written before the siege of *Jerusalem*; but, as I have stated when dealing with *Dean Farrar's* statement to this effect, there is not a scrap of evidence to support the assertion. The so-called pre-

* This was evidently an ancient rite, and the retention of old words in such ceremonies is notable.

diction of the destruction of the holy city cannot be shown to have been written before the occurrence of that event.

I will, however, assume, for the sake of argument, that the *Synoptical Gospels* came into existence fifty years after the death of *Christ*—say about the year 80 A.D.—though there is no warrant for placing them at such an early date. The case, then, stands thus: That after the lapse of half a century three men sit down to write a biography of *Jesus*, including the sayings and doings ascribed to him during his short public ministry; that they accomplished this task, and that these three separate and independent accounts are the Gospels of *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *Luke*. It is the alleged independence of these accounts we have now to test.

In looking through these "histories," the first matter that attracts our attention is the arrangement of the different events and circumstances. We find, in the first place, that *Matthew* and *Mark* relate as many as seventy-five circumstances in exactly the same order. Next, we find that *Mark* and *Luke* narrate seventy-two circumstances in exactly the same order. Lastly, we find that *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *Luke*, all three, record sixty events or circumstances in exactly the same order. Before commenting upon this remarkable fact, it may be well to note the circumstances mentioned in the same order by all three *Synoptics*. These are the following:—

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| 1. Ministry of <i>John the Baptist</i> . | 31. <i>Christ's</i> public entry into <i>Jerusalem</i> . |
| 2. <i>Baptism</i> of <i>Christ</i> . | 32. The cleansing of the temple. |
| 3. <i>Temptation</i> of <i>Christ</i> . | 33. <i>Christ's</i> authority questioned. |
| 4. <i>Christ</i> goes to <i>Galilee</i> after <i>John</i> in prison. | 34. <i>Parable</i> of the Wicked Husbandmen. |
| 5. <i>Christ</i> begins to teach in <i>Galilee</i> . | 35. <i>Question</i> of tribute to <i>Cesar</i> . |
| 6. <i>Healing</i> a leper. | 36. <i>Woman</i> who had seven husbands. |
| 7. <i>Healing</i> a man sick of the palsy. | 37. How <i>Christ</i> was the Son of <i>David</i> . |
| 8. <i>Call</i> of <i>Matthew</i> or <i>Levi</i> . | 38. <i>Warnings</i> against the Scribes and Pharisees. |
| 9. <i>Levi's</i> feast. | 39. <i>Christ</i> foretells destruction of <i>Jerusalem</i> . |
| 10. <i>Discourse</i> on fasting. | 40. <i>Priests</i> take counsel against <i>Christ</i> . |
| 11. <i>Patching</i> garments and bottles. | 41. <i>Judas</i> turns traitor. |
| 12. <i>Disciples</i> plucking corn on the Sabbath. | 42. <i>Disciples</i> sent to find a room. |
| 13. <i>Healing</i> a man with a withered hand. | 43. The <i>Passover</i> and <i>Last Supper</i> . |
| 14. <i>Parable</i> of the Sower. | 44. <i>Christ</i> foretells <i>Peter's</i> denial. |
| 15. <i>Herod</i> believes <i>Christ</i> to be the <i>Baptist</i> . | 45. <i>Christ's</i> agony in <i>Gethsemane</i> . |
| 16. <i>Feeding</i> five thousand persons. | 46. <i>Christ</i> betrayed and made prisoner. |
| 17. <i>Christ</i> asks what men say of him. | 47. <i>Christ</i> before <i>Caiaphas</i> . |
| 18. <i>Christ</i> foretells his death and resurrection. | 48. <i>Peter's</i> denial of <i>Christ</i> . |
| 19. <i>Taking</i> up <i>Cross</i> to follow <i>Christ</i> . | 49. <i>Christ</i> before <i>Pilate</i> . |
| 20. <i>Transfiguration</i> of <i>Christ</i> . | 50. <i>Jews</i> demand the release of <i>Barrabbas</i> . |
| 21. <i>Disciples</i> unable to cure a demoniac. | 51. <i>Simon</i> bears the <i>Cross</i> . |
| 22. <i>Christ</i> again foretells his death, etc. | 52. <i>Christ</i> crucified. |
| 23. <i>Disciples</i> contend who should be greatest. | 53. <i> Casting</i> lots for <i>Christ's</i> garments. |
| 24. <i>Christ</i> blesses little children. | 54. <i>Christ</i> mocked and reviled. |
| 25. The rich young man. | 55. <i>Darkness</i> all over the land. |
| 26. The camel and the needle's eye. | 56. The veil of the temple rent. |
| 27. <i>Reward</i> for following <i>Christ</i> . | 57. The testimony of the <i>Centurion</i> . |
| 28. <i>Christ</i> again foretells his death, etc. | 58. <i>Women</i> beholding afar off. |
| 29. <i>Healing</i> a blind man near <i>Jericho</i> . | 59. <i>Joseph</i> of <i>Arimathea</i> . |
| 30. Two disciples sent for a colt. | 60. <i>Mary</i> <i>Magdalene</i> at the sepulchre. |

As already stated, *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *Luke* narrate all the foregoing events in the order here given. To these might be added fifteen additional circumstances, omitted by *Luke*, which *Matthew* and *Mark* record in exactly the same order; also twelve other events, omitted by *Matthew*, which *Mark* and *Luke* give in exactly the same order.

Now, it is simply impossible that three independent writers could relate sixty undated and unlocated events or circumstances—the majority of them only trifling incidents or anecdotes, having no connection with each other—in

exactly the same order. To do this, the writers would have had to take notes at the time, which we know they did not. Mark and Luke, too, are not even said to have been witnesses of the matters they record; and the latter, we know from his Preface, did not live in apostolic times. A few of the events recorded, it is but fair to add, would naturally be placed before or after certain other events (though not *immediately* before or after)—*e.g.*, Jesus being brought before Pilate would precede the Crucifixion, and Mary Magdalene at the sepulchre would follow that event, though there might be other circumstances recorded between them; also Christ's prediction that Peter should deny him would naturally be placed before (but not *immediately* before) the story of that denial. These may be admitted. But how comes it that all three Synoptists place the Call of Matthew after the healing a man sick of the palsy; the Disciples plucking corn on the Sabbath after a discourse on garments and bottles; the parable of the Sower after the healing a man with a withered hand; the Disciples unable to cast out a demon after the Transfiguration; Christ blessing little children after the contention of the Disciples as to who should be the greatest; the story of the rich young man who declined to sell his goods and give the proceeds to the poor after Christ blessing little children; the question of giving tribute to Cæsar after the parable of the Wicked Husbandmen; and all the other undated and unconnected circumstances in exactly the same order, from beginning to end?

No three men sitting down to relate sixty or seventy trifling incidents which had happened half a century before could by any possibility narrate them in exactly the same order, more especially when the majority of the matters were of the nature of anecdotes, with nothing to show when or where they had occurred. What we are asked to believe amounts to nothing less than the following: Matthew is called into a room, and given a bag containing sixty billiard balls, and told to place them in six rows upon the table. He does so, and is dismissed. A private mark is then put upon each ball to denote the order in which Matthew arranged them, and they are put back into the bag. Mark is next called in, and told to take the balls from the bag and place them in six rows upon the table. He does so, and retires. The balls are then examined, and it is found that Mark arranged them, of course by accident, in exactly the same order as Matthew. The balls are again placed in the bag, and Luke is called in. That evangelist takes the bag, empties the contents on the table, and then, by instinct or intuition, picks out the balls and places them one after the other in precisely the same order as Matthew and Mark. Is there anyone with a particle of sense who could believe in this identical arrangement of the balls in the circumstances mentioned? In the same way, no one who looks at the arrangement of the events in the Synoptical Gospels, and who gives a moment's consideration to the matter, can believe those Gospels to be independent accounts. They are merely three versions of a common pre-existing document, with sundry additions from some other existing documents. And here we are again reminded of the statement in Luke's Preface—that there were "many" Gospels in existence before the Third Gospel was written.

Dr. Sanday, who is perhaps the highest living authority on the Gospels, in the "Oxford House Papers," No. 9, says, in speaking of "the different sources of the Synoptic narrative":—

"If that part of it which is common to all three Gospels carries with it the most weight, it is not, as used to be thought, because we have here three distinct sources, but because its presence in all three points to a single source older than them all, and one on which it would seem that the primitive Church placed a sort of *imprimatur*."

Here it is admitted that the Synoptical Gospels are not independent accounts of the ministry of Christ, but that the matter which is common to two or to three (which includes nearly the whole of the Gospel of Mark) was copied from an earlier Gospel. Matthew, Mark, and Luke were thus merely compilers, who took all the events and circumstances they relate from pre-existing writings; consequently we have not even their authority for the matters recorded in their Gospels. These matters were written by some person or persons unknown, who lived before their time. Hence, it can be asserted without the smallest fear of refutation that nobody knows who first wrote the stories

in the Synoptics, nobody knows when they were written, and nobody knows where. All we can say with any certainty on the matter is, that they were unknown to Paul and the apostle John (the author of the Revelation), and must, therefore, have been fabricated in post-apostolic times. The three later editors, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, are thus pushed forward into the second century. Also, instead of the Synoptical stories carrying more weight because they are vouched for by no one, those stories for that very reason carry no weight at all.

ABRACADABRA.

RIVAL RELIGIONS IN JAPAN.

BUDDHISM and Christianity have come into deadly conflict in Japan. These two religious systems represent two distinct world-views. In Buddhism we see the emphasis laid on the idea of the whole, entirely distinct from the idea of the parts. In Christianity, on the other hand, the emphasis is laid on the idea of human personality as the expression of the whole. The one regards ethical attributes to be entirely inapplicable to the nature of the ultimate reality, which lies back of this impermanent, finite existence. The other looks upon ethical attributes as constituting the very core and essence of the world-substance, and the full possession of those attributes by individuals as the only warrant for their immortal existence. The conflict is not between one native system and another foreign system, but between two distinct world-views, which are fighting for mastery, so to speak, within the mind of the nation. For the Christian churches of Japan are now no longer a sort of foreign settlement in the midst of an unsympathetic community. They have become naturalized, and the ideas they represent have powerful supporters in the new literature of the country. Thus the conflict rages between Buddhist pantheism on the one hand, and Christian theism on the other—the one strong in its hold upon the masses, supported by the natural trend of native thought, itself the result of that teaching, and encouraged by the unexpected aid it is receiving from a certain class of scientific thinking in the West; the other is strong in its hold upon the ethical sense of the people, so ably trained by Confucianism, and is encouraged by the enthusiasm manifested by souls newly emancipated from the fetters of pessimistic fatalism. On which side shall the victory be?

A very noteworthy feature in the whole movement is that each side is casting away its old armor of scholastic dogmatism, and coming forward to meet the other, clad in the simple native attire of its own.* To change the figure, in each the dogmatic superstructure is being battered down by some of its own followers; for Higher Criticism has come into Japan, and is active both in the Christian and the Buddhist communities. As a result, the essential truths of one religion will be matched with the essential truths of the other. What is yet more remarkable is the fact that religious hatred and fanaticism are gradually dying out, and friendly discussions and candid comparisons of views are taking the place of mutual suspicion and angry disputations. The one good effect of such impartial criticism will be the clearer appreciation of the similarity, as well as the dissimilarity, between the two opposing systems. Can it be possible that, as the final outcome of these tendencies, some great mind will arise who will present in a larger and deeper world-view than either a complete synthesis of the essential truths of both, and thus be a means of reconciliation between the theistic West and the pantheistic East? Is such an outcome altogether a fool's dream, never to be realized? Or are the two views, on the contrary, utterly irreconcilable, and shall they finally divide the field, to remain separate and distinct forever?

TOKIWO YOKIO.

—*International Journal of Ethics (Philadelphia)*.

"Mary, don't you want to be a good little girl and go to heaven?" "No, please, not until I've been to London."

* A very interesting movement has been going on for several years among the younger Buddhists towards attempting a critical exposition of Buddhism. There is, indeed, a great need for Higher Criticism in Buddhism, and these younger men are courageously initiating the movement. Their official organ is the review called *The Budkio*.

THE LAW AND RELIGIOUS OPINION.

WHILE the general trend of the Progressive movement is in the direction of putting new duties upon "our grandmother, the State," in promoting the material well-being of the people, it is well that we should be sometimes reminded that the State already exercises some functions of which it might well be relieved. Interference with the free expression of opinion on matters concerning religion is certainly one of these. We are glad, therefore, to see in the February number of the *Free Review* the first of a series of articles by Mr. Fredk. Verinder on the Blasphemy Laws. It is perhaps significant that the writer is a well-known Churchman, and that his work for the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws has been done in connection with a Church society—the Guild of St. Matthew—of which he has been for twenty years the honorary secretary. It will be news to many that it is still a legal offence, subject to the most vindictive penalties, "for any person brought up as a Christian to deny the truth of Christianity, however respectfully." Mr. Verinder quotes a recent judgment in the Court of Appeal for the fact that "there are old Acts of Parliament still unrepealed under which unbelievers can be cruelly persecuted," and shows how these old Acts, and still older *dicta* of the judges, have been used within the last twelve years to deprive a constituency of its constitutional rights, and to fetter the freedom of bequest. It is certainly not so generally known as it should be that "the Blasphemy Laws embody the leading principles and imitate most of the methods of the criminal law against heresy which was administered by the Holy Inquisition." No form of State patronage of religion is so offensive as the assumption that Christianity needs the support of the policeman and the gaoler against those who do not believe in its doctrines and have the courage to say so.

—*The New Age* (edited by A. E. Fletcher, late editor of the London "Daily Chronicle").

ACID DROPS.

AMERICAN Churches are not over-scrupulous in the means they employ for raising the wind. Writing in the *Forum*, the Rev. W. B. Hale tells some of the things he has seen in the newspaper reports of church functions: "My eye is caught by accounts of a Mock Town Meeting, a Poker Party, a Fancy Dress Drill, a Tambourine Drill (irreverently described by the secular press as 'a winner'), a Dude Drill, a Great Moral Dime Show (introducing McGinty, a dwarf, and a petrified man), a Spider-web Party, a Mother Goose Market, and a Husking Bee. There are one or two announcements of 'Gymnastic Exhibitions' and 'Athletic Exhibitions,' which I make bold to believe are euphemisms for sparring contests. It was in the Boston *Herald* of only a day or two ago that I recognized in the name, 'Ike Weir, the Spider,' committed to trial for brutal assault, that of a pugilist long disreputable, who has appeared in my own town of Middleboro', Massachusetts, in a boxing-match which was a feature of a church fair. After having served his time, 'the Spider' will be an even more attractive personage for churches."

Judge Roger A. Pryor, of the Supreme Court of New York, has denied a Jewish organization a certificate of incorporation, because its annual meeting was fixed on Sunday. The judge held that the holding of corporate meetings on Sunday was affronting the religious susceptibilities of Christians. It did not occur to him that holding corporate meetings on Saturday was affronting the religious susceptibilities of Jews.

Mr. W. T. Stead, in the current number of the *Review of Reviews*, reproduces that silly old picture of the Queen, with Prince Albert behind her, giving a Bible to a black chieftain as "The Secret of England's Greatness." Mr. Stead appears to regard the picture as historical, but it is quite imaginary. The Queen never gave a Bible to an African chief, and never told him that the Bible was the secret of England's greatness. The story has been officially denied; but, as it serves the turn, it will no doubt continue to do service during the rest of Her Majesty's reign.

The editor of the *Review of Reviews*, writing on "The Higher Criticism and the Bible," says:—"The result at which scholars such as Wellhausen, Cheyne, and Driver have arrived is by no means only of a negative kind. It is as positive as the theory of evolution, and quite comprehensible. And what it comes to is this: In their opinion the whole of the old mechanical theory of the inspiration of the Bible has gone by the board, as completely as the old mechanical theory of the creation of the world in a six days' shift." What is this but saying that the plain

statements of the Bible are found to be no longer deserving of credit?

Mr. Grant Allen is preparing for publication a book on *The Evolution of God*. The *New Age* is glad that Mr. Allen is not going to "discuss the question of the existence of the Deity." It forgets that the title of the book is itself Atheistic. How could there be an evolution of an infinite and eternal personality?

The Reading Branch of that funny Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews has just held its annual meeting. Several reverend gentlemen made glowing speeches, and Dr. Ellis gave a beautiful report of his work in Russian Poland, where in eighteen years he had baptized 389 Hebrews. He did not say how long he kept them. Besides, it is obvious that Poland is a long way from Reading. Why does not the Jew Conversion Society produce a few converts a little nearer home?

The Vegetarian Society was started in 1847, and celebrates its Jubilee this year. One method of celebration is said in the *Vegetarian Messenger* to be the issue of a work on the Biblical aspect of vegetarianism. It is easy enough for kreophagists to point to Jehovah as sanctioning roast meats and sacrifices, and to Jesus as partaking of fish and Pass-over lamb; but the vegetarian will not do his cause much good by pointing to Daniel. The Society would do better to confine themselves to the humane aspect of their teaching, instead of seeking to back it up by the Protestant fetish book.

A motion in favor of free education, brought before the Blackburn School Board by Mr. Hurley, of course met with strenuous opposition from the clerical party led by the Rev. Gordon Goe. Mr. Hurley's motion was defeated, but it will not end there.

As the vicar of All Souls', Brighton, was announcing an intended marriage, his curate got up and forbade the banns, on the ground that the man was a divorced person. What cheek these clericals have, to be sure! Church of England clergymen are State officials, and the law is laid down for them by the State. All they have to do is to obey or clear out. That Brighton curate thinks the Church of England ought to be above the law of the land. So it might be if it would only support itself, instead of living on national revenues. In that case, however, its clergy would not marry people as they do now. The Church parson marries people, without the presence of the civil registrar, just because he is a public functionary.

Clericals are not always fond of "charity" when they do not boss the show themselves. The Cleethorpes Alexandria Hall Company recently gave a free tea to some two hundred poor inhabitants. A certain Primitive Methodist minister, who had been furnished with tickets for distribution, returned them all, on the ground that the tea was to be given in a theatre and by a class of people associated with secular entertainments. The reverend gentleman evidently cares a great deal more about his own clerical business than about the pressing wants of the poor, for whom his motto seems to be "No church, no tea."

A woman, whose friends say she is suffering from religious mania, was seen walking over the frozen ground near St. Andrew's Church, Bethune-road, Stoke Newington, in the costume of Eve. A policeman restored her to her friends.

What Christianity really is may be seen in the following cutting from the *Irish Catholic*: "St. Anthony's Brief (or Letter), which has touched a relic of the true Cross, the veil of the Blessed Virgin, and a relic of St. Anthony of Padua, printed on linen, together with a printed leaflet, explaining the history and origin of the Brief and Medal of St. Anthony, will be sent to all devout clients of St. Anthony who send their name and address with offering and petition (to be placed near Jesus in the Tabernacle) to the Rev. Director. Those who wear the Brief with confidence obtain strength and courage in temptations, troubles, trials, and sickness. Our Holy Father, Pope Leo XIII., grants one hundred days' indulgence, once a day, to all who devoutly wear the Brief and recite the prayer to St. Anthony. 'If you wish for miracles,' says St. Bonaventure, 'invoke St. Anthony.' Holy Mass will be said once a week for all who wear the miraculous Brief."

It may be said this is a private advertisement. Not so. Father Beale, the Rev. Director, quotes the Approbation of His Eminence Cardinal Logue, Lord Primate of all Ireland, who says: "Dear Father Beale,—I have great pleasure in approving of your pious efforts to propagate devotion to St. Anthony of Padua. It is a devotion from which the faithful will be sure to reap rich fruits."

American papers report that Sankey, the man who used

to grind out the hymn for the old firm of Moody and Sankey, having gone broke in his old age, has gone back to revivalism, and isn't making expenses at the game. Moody bought land with his share of the loot, and is booming. Also, the two old partners have established a life-long feud, and hate each other just like two hardened sinners.—*Sydney Bulletin*.

A backblocks (Queensland) town which had suffered from a three months' drought was proposing to pray for rain. A local farmer, hearing of the proposition, wrote indignantly to the *Star* in protest. "Why, Mr. Editor," he wrote "I got an acre and a half of wheat in just now, and if there was rain for the next few days, through them Pharisees praying, the whole blame crop would be spoiled."—*Sydney Bulletin*.

South Australians curse the present drought for more reasons than one. All over the blighted land amateur dramatic companies are hurling *The Curse of Drink* and *Ten Nights in a Bar-Room* at unoffending citizens, who are prevented from killing the performers because the proceeds are "for the distressed farmers." Why heaven has seen fit to kill the farmers' cattle and wither the crops, and yet spares the amateur actor, is an inscrutable mystery.—*Sydney Bulletin*.

Mrs. Booth Clibborn, of the Salvation Army, recently appeared before a well-to-do audience at Brussels dressed in sackcloth, and with ashes on her head. It is said that she made a great impression. Perhaps her husband will cap this, and make a still greater impression, by adopting another Bible costume—that in which David danced before the Ark.

The *Christian World* has an article on "Public Money to Papists." This is *apropos* of the contemplated Catholic University for Ireland. Our contemporary points out that the Conscience Clause will really amount to nothing, because the "lonely Protestant" will take in Romanism "through the pores." Yet the same journal is in favor of religious teaching in the Board schools of this country, and thinks the Conscience Clause quite good enough for the lonely non-Christian. Evidently the value of the Conscience Clause depends upon whether you give it to others, or have to make use of it yourself.

"The greatest evil of Board schools," says the Rev. F. C. Trench, "is that they destroy the pastoral relations of the clergy with the children." Precisely. The clergy cannot get at the children as easily in the Board schools, and make them profitable sheep for the clerical shepherd. At bottom the interest of the clergy in education is entirely professional. It is a mere matter of self-interest.

Dr. Horton, the Hampstead preacher, has written a book on *Oliver Cromwell: A Study in Religion*. It is to be published about the end of March. We shall notice it when it appears. Meanwhile, we venture to say that Oliver Cromwell's importance as a great historical figure is not at all "religious," although it is perhaps natural that clerical gentlemen like Dr. Horton should seek to make capital out of the fact that he was a Christian.

The first statue of Jesus Christ publicly erected in England is to be put up at Lady Henry Somerset's Inebriate Village at Duxhurst. It will be in bronze, but has not been modelled from photographs, nor does it represent him in the act of turning water into wine.

There have been about 10,000 deaths from plague in Bombay in excess of the average, and the famine has forced two millions to accept employment on relief works.

The Sanitary Council at Constantinople has resolved to prohibit pilgrimages from India and Persia to Kherbela. This is the holy place about sixty miles from Bagdad, where Hussein and Hassan, the sons of Ali, are buried, and which is a favorite place of burial with many Indian sects, especially the Shiites. It is the custom for wealthy Shiites bodies to be laid aside until a caravan leaves for Kherbela. The dead are sown up in carpets, with large quantities of saffron to preserve them. At Kherbela the bodies are buried, and carpets and saffron are sold to European dealers.

The Rev. Stopford A. Brooke, being interviewed by the *New Age*, says that "Modern liberal theology seems to have reached that point of negation from which there is no 'advance' possible except into unbelief in God." We are pleased to hear it, though we fear it is too good to be true.

Referring to Mark Twain's last book, the *Literary World* says: "We think the attempt to write a humorous diary in the character of Adam is an undertaking charged with perils." Why? Surely the critic is not so intellectually belated as to believe in Adam as an historical character.

Where, then, does the "peril" come in? We wish the critic would explain.

The Rev. Mr. Haweis, lecturing at the Tyne Theatre, Newcastle, made out that Garibaldi was a good Christian. Most people would think he was a curious Christian to become president of an Atheist Society. But Mr. Haweis is a curious kind of a Christian himself.

This is what Mrs. Besant says of the "Great Teachers," alias Mahatmas, of Theosophy: "They do not argue, they proclaim; they do not discuss, they declare; they do not reach their conclusions by logical processes." Whoever thought they did? Mrs. Besant is simply "proclaiming" and "declaring" what everybody knows. No one would ever think of accusing a Mahatma, or any Theosophist, of patronizing a logical process.

A lady at a religious meeting in Aberdeenshire the other night, commenting on the want of tact displayed by some well-intentioned people, mentioned that recently one of her lady friends, while travelling in a railway carriage, was presented by a fellow passenger with a tract on "The Evils of Profane Swearing"!

A parson who was very strong against the vice of swearing went to Palestine, and, as usual, found his donkey wouldn't go. The dragoon told him he must yell, as he did, "Yullah" and "Bismillah." The man of God was surprised when he discovered that he had been cursing and swearing all through the Holy Land.

It is difficult to reach the bottom of orthodox imbecility, but we must be pretty near it in the recent volume of sermons by Dr. G. F. Pentecost, who tells of "a little fair-haired boy of perhaps eight years" who told a congregation of two thousand people that he "had been a Christian for a great many years." This declaration "set strong men and women weeping"—perhaps because they couldn't laugh.

A South London curate's wife rides a bicycle and calls on the parishioners in "rationals"—at which the church members grumble. They never read of "rationals," or "bikes" either, in the Bible.

Christopher Crayon, of the *Christian World*, writes a long letter from Alexandria. It was there, he remarks, that the beautiful Hypatia was torn to pieces by "an infuriated mob." Prudence forbids him to say it was a Christian mob.

The Benefices Bill, in proposing to retire worn-out clergy compulsorily touches clerical life upon a sensitive spot—its freehold. The *Daily News* says Church reform at the expense of the aged clergy has not an entirely pleasant look when it is remembered that the oft-denounced scandals of the sale of livings are absolutely ignored in the measure now projected.

The wide circulation of Tolstoi's works in the Russian Empire has long been disquieting to the Holy Synod, which is at last bent on excommunicating him and them. His last work, *The Kingdom of God is Within You*, is especially obnoxious, as it dispenses with all external religion, even dependence on written revelation, and declares that, whatever the crimes of the people, there can be no crime equal to that of government itself. The established despotism of Russia and the established State Church which upholds it are the greatest possible infamy. He denied that if the people were left wholly to themselves they could ever commit crimes so abominable that the sum of their evil would equal the sum of the wrong done by the despotic Church and the tyrannical State of Russia. Since the publication of this work his family have been in constant alarm. His daughter recently said to a visitor: "The approach of a sledge always excites us. Every minute we fear that gendarmes may come to take away our father."

Tolstoi calls his doctrine Christianity. He insists on the precepts of Christ as furnishing the only rules for the right government of human conduct. Yet he rejects the entire doctrinal framework of the Christian scheme of redemption, including original sin, atonement, the Trinity, and the divinity of Christ; and he has little faith in the immortality of the soul. His religion is a religion of this world, based almost entirely on terrestrial considerations. If he refers frequently to the teachings of Christ and accepts his precepts as the rules which should govern human conduct, it is not because he believes that Christ was God, but because he regards those precepts as a formal embodiment of the highest and noblest philosophy of life. Tolstoi has mixed some leaven of Freethought as well as much mysticism with the creed of his youth, and the result is not relished by the powers that be.

An Oklahomian anxiously asks: "Is there any way by

which Rev. Sam Small can be made to repay borrowed money? None that I know of. He is so devoid of shame as to care absolutely nothing for exposure, and judgments against him are quoted at 101 below par. If my correspondent could corner Sam with a stiff hickory club, he might prevail upon him to discharge an honest debt; but the chances are that the modern Pecksniff would float out of the difficulty on a stream of penitential tears, tell an audience the same evening that he was being persecuted by the peons of the rum-power for Christ's sake, then take up a collection.—*Brann's "Iconoclast."*

The great-grand-daughter of Benjamin Franklin was refused membership in a swell association some time ago on the ground that her illustrious ancestor "was not a gentleman, but a tradesman." A "gentleman" or "lady" in the more or less valuable opinion of these immaculate idiots, is a person of wealth whose ancestors did not work. They claim to be ladies and gentlemen; ergo, they are the lineal descendants of that pair of simians which God created when he made Adam and Eve to be our ancestors. They were perfectly correct in deciding that the descendant of old Ben Franklin did not belong to a "set" whose "genealogical tree" is full of cocoa-nuts. When they get to heaven they will refuse to associate with Christ Jesus because he was a carpenter, and turn up their patrician proboscides at Almighty God for having once worked in mud. "The more fools the more fun."—*Brann's "Iconoclast."*

There is again talk of the purchase of Palestine from the Sultan by a Jewish syndicate, and of its reorganization as a Jewish principality. The Sultan wants cash, but Palestine is a Holy Land to Moslems as well as to the Jews, and Moslem feeling might revolt against it. The persecution of Jews in Russia has led to a large increase of immigration, chiefly to the holy city; but it would be a mistake to suppose that Jews in general want to get back to Jerusalem. They are quite content that Palestine shall continue to be the land of promise.

Palestine was described in the old book as a land flowing with milk and honey. A more truthful description was that of Gibbon, who compared it in size and fertility to Wales. Worse than Wales, it has sea on one side and desert all around. Only most expensive irrigation works would make Palestine productive. At present it lives chiefly out of tourists.

Professor Lombroso gives the anthropological view of the Jew in the current number of *To-Morrow*. He says: "By nature the Jew has a natural tenacity of purpose which is explicable, for only the strong, the energetic, could persist in the desire to remain Hebrews in the face of their terrible persecution. They had to mask their obstinacy under the cover of servility and ductility in order to resist; and hence there has been developed in the Jew that superficial adaptability which really only serves to emphasize the more his obstinate conservatism. Oppressed, forced to live in cities, shut out from active life, they have lost their traditional, historical qualities, that physical courage which was one of their salient characteristics. The Jews are no longer strong. Yet, nevertheless, no race resists disease so well. The consequence of this is that in body as well as in soul, morally as well as physically, they are the products of a natural selection that has gone on for over two thousand years, the most rigorous and the most painful to which human beings have ever been subjected. All that was too weak among them was eliminated by death or by baptism. As is but natural after such long ages of being treated as outcasts, when liberated they like to flaunt their wealth and ability. They love to prove that they are the equals, if not the superiors, of their oppressors, whom they greatly like to overreach."

The Rev. Dr. Wendte, of Oakland, California, one of the most prominent Unitarian ministers on the Pacific coast, has awakened something of a sensation by advocating some form of painless death for incurables. He reiterated his belief in a sermon printed in the *San Francisco Call*, in the course of which he said: "But a step beyond establishing hospital wards is needed, and it is one which civilized society is ready to take. I refer to the humane disposal of those who are suffering needless and cruel tortures, and whose death is inevitable. Why seek, as now, to prolong their agonies? Why exhaust the resources of medical science to keep them in misery? Would it not be a more Christian act to put them gently out of pain? We mercifully end the life of a suffering horse or dog whose restoration is impossible. Shall we be less merciful to our human kind than to the brute creation?"

A writer in *City and State* tells of a young reporter who asked a minister for the subject of his sermon, and was told that it was to be an exegesis of a certain passage of Scripture. This is the way the reporter got it: "The Rev. Dr. Blank read an exceedingly able paper, and one entirely satisfactory to the company present, entitled 'Ecce Jesus.'"

Mrs. Bishop Wightman, of the Methodist Church South, has given to Bishop Hurst for the American University an autograph letter of John Wesley, written March 31, 1790, the closing of which is: "As soon as possible you should put the Believers in Bands, and introduce ye whole Methodist Discipline. But, I pray, do not introduce slouched hats; let us not imitate Clowns or Quakers. Next to the Bible, I love Common Sense. Therefore, I would never be singular for singularity sake. I am, dear Billy, your affectionate Friend and Brother, J. Wesley. Beware of women." The last words are as characteristic as Sam Weller senior's, "Beware of vidders." Wesley had suffered. So had his wife.

Judge Snagge, at Northampton, when a witness was about to be sworn, described the kissing of the Testament as a dirty practice. He was surprised that the medical profession throughout the country did not revolt against it. He wished it to be understood that no witness in his courts need kiss a dirty Testament which all manner of people had kissed. At the same time, he regarded the Scotch form of swearing as objectionable, on the ground that the oath contained words which he should not like people, especially in Northampton, to repeat. Afterwards the witness was sworn on a book wrapped in clean paper. Judge Snagge, we suppose, did not think it necessary to remind Northampton that Mr. Bradlaugh had made it possible to affirm on all occasions.

The eleventh quarterly statement of the Palestine Exploration Fund, first issued to subscribers, has for its chief feature the report of Dr. F. J. Bliss on the dimensions of the pool of Siloam, which it is a hard task to make accord with the "Siloam inscription." Of course there is an urgent appeal for funds to carry on the work.

A genuine believer has appeared at Bolton in the person of Arthur Knowles. He has been brought before the Lunacy Commissioners. Evidence was given to the effect that Knowles, after joining the sect of faith-healers, became afflicted with religious mania, and did some extraordinary things. He poured his wines into the gutters, burned his cigars, prayed by the dead body of a child to bring it to life, roamed about the moors naked, ascended a hill without shoes or stockings to preach like Christ, and said he was the Savior. Mr. Knowles's religion has brought him close to a lunatic asylum.

The Germans boast of their Sunday liberty, but a baker in Berlin has been indicted for the crime of playing worldly airs on the piano during church time. He informed the policeman who heard the desecration that it was his wife's birthday. But the officer insisted that the family must make merry to the tune of the "Old Hundred," "In the Hour of Trial," or of similar inspiring music. The baker, taking no notice of the warning, played "Pop Goes the Weasel" and "The Dude's March," and a summons was served.

Anyone desirous of acting as handy man to a generous man of God may jump at the following offer taken from the *Church Times*: "A handy man wanted, with knowledge of gardening, who understands care of cow, pony, and hens, and is willing to do some work in house (boots, etc.). Must be regular communicant. Preference to one who will help in choir and play cricket; 14s. 6d. a week, with house and garden on Vicarage grounds; 16s. to a married man whose wife would help one day a week in the Vicarage."

There have been some lively scenes in the Lower House of Canterbury Convocation. The Bishop of Stepney, speaking on an amendment of Bishop Barry, pronounced the original motion to be plain and straightforward. Bishop Barry regarded this as a personal reflection on his amendment, and repudiated it with some warmth. The Bishop of Stepney, in replying, said he had been at many debates, but had never heard a more unfounded and unjust inference than the one Bishop Barry had chosen to saddle on him.

The next day an amusing discussion arose on what, the Prolocutor said, was a serious matter—the theft of the Bishop of Dover's greatcoat in the Church House when he was sitting on the Marriage Law Committee last November. The Bishop sent a postcard describing his coat as a good one of rough cloth, with the cathedral keys in it, and asking any member who had taken it by mistake to return it. It was resolved that, as this was not the first time things had been lost, the attention of the Secretary of the Church House should be directed to the matter.

The *Truthseeker* tells the following interesting story: "The Rev. G. W. White, of Denver, had implicit confidence in prayer. When he found himself short of funds, both he and his wife fervently prayed heaven for a remittance. The next day he had one hundred dollars, and the prayer theory seemed likely to receive new confirmation, until the minister was placed under arrest for rifling another man's mail and diverting its pecuniary contents to his own ends. The untimely interference of the police robbed the miracle of its moral effect."

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, February 7, Manchester; subjects: 11, "Earth, Heaven, and Hell"; 3, "The New Woman's Bible"; 6.30, "Colonel Ingersoll and American Liberalism."

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—February 7, Athenæum Hall, London; 14, Leicester; 21, Liverpool; 23, Paisley; 24, Greenock; 25, Motherwell; 26, Dunoon; 28, Glasgow. April 4, Sheffield.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

REGULATOR.—It is an absurd story. Thomas Paine never said he would give worlds if he could only destroy his *Age of Reason*. This is one of a multitude of orthodox lies about that great man. "E. L. G.," whose note you cut out and sent us from the *Echo*, often puts his initials to despicable rubbish. When a man says, "The story is so likely that I have no doubt of its truth," he shows himself utterly ignorant, or careless of the first principles of evidence.

C. F. TOLFREY (Arundel).—Write to Mr. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C. Perhaps he could find you a customer.

A. W. ORR.—Kindly send orders in future to our publisher, R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C. Delay often arises when orders are sent to Mr. Foote, who is frequently absent from London.

W. D. ROLLEY.—Many thanks. The Inebriates at Lady Somerset's village would probably worship the statue if they thought it could turn their water into whisky.

A. J. H.—Thanks for cuttings.

J. H. BAIN.—Delighted to hear from you as a recent convert from a Baptist church to Freethought, largely through Mr. Cohen's influence. Thanks for the "Providence and Good Instruments" story, but the substance of it recently appeared in the *Freethinker*.

CLETHORPES.—Thanks for cutting and your letter. You omitted your signature by inadvertence.

J. R. WILLIAMSON.—In our next.

E. H. S.—(1) There is a Life of Richard Carlile, written by G. J. Hoiyoake. You can probably get it from Mr. Forder. Read it for yourself. We are not at all concerned at this time of day to contradict slanders against Carlile by the late Brewin Grant.

(2) The Roman method of disposing of the dead was cremation. The Christians adopted the Jewish practice of burial, largely, no doubt, from a belief in the resurrection of the body. For this reason they burrowed under Rome and made the Catacombs. That is all the mystery. (3) Mr. Foote has never debated with Dr. Jamieson of Glasgow. He regrets that Mr. Watts debated with such a vulgar disputant, who considers personalities the be-all and end-all of discussion. No good is done to Freethought by encounters with such opponents. (4) We decline to take any notice of the scurrilous paper you refer to. You ought to know better than to attach the slightest importance to its bombastic ravings.

S. BRADY, in sending a subscription to Mr. Foote's Lecture Scheme, says:—"I believe it to be a thoroughly good means of bringing Freethought before the people in the remoter districts, under the best auspices, and at a much earlier period than would be otherwise possible."

A. A.—Of no value now.

REGULATOR.—Thanks. Always glad to receive cuttings.

H. SILVERTON.—In due course.

ELCANA.—Thanks.

A. J. H.—We saw the *Tit-Bits* article on Lord Halsbury. It is very inaccurate as far as Bradlaugh is concerned. Lord Halsbury, then Sir Hardinge Giffard, did not merely oppose Bradlaugh in the House of Commons; he prosecuted him in the Law Courts for years, though at the finish he was badly beaten.

J. M.—Will try to find a corner.

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURE SCHEME.—Collection at Glasgow (January 24), £1 14s. 7d.; G. Colquhoun, 10s.; Mr. Clink, 2s. 6d.; S. Brady, 10s.

T. CLARK.—Received.

Owing to Mr. Foote's late return to London from the North, some correspondence still stands over till next week, including the few letters re the N.S.S. presidency. The difficulty with respect to these is that correspondents forget one of the conditions laid down—namely, that the personal element of the question should be eliminated; and thus their letters must be edited before insertion. Praise of the existing President, or even censure, is quite beside the point, although the impulse to utter it may be very natural. We hope other correspondents will carefully bear this in mind.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—People's Newspaper—Freidenker—Torch of Reason—Truthseeker—New York Public Opinion—Lindsey and Lincolnshire Star—Echo—Glasgow Herald—Referoo—Star—Manchester Guardian—Western Daily Mercury—Two Worlds—Morning Leader—Progressive Thinker—Philadelphia Ledger—New York Sun—Vegetarian Messenger—Southern Cross—Irish Catholic—Northern Daily Telegraph—Newcastle Daily News—Aston News—Consent Chronicle—Bolton Chronicle—Isle of Man Times—Independent Pulpit—Free Review—Young Socialist—The Little Candle.

ATHEIST (Liverpool).—You omitted to append your name and address.

THE National Secular Society's office is at No. 377 Strand, London, where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

The *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

It being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

SUGAR PLUMS.

AFTER his Glasgow lectures Mr. Foote visited four places in the district. On Monday evening he lectured at Dunoon, being accompanied by Mr. D. Black, who took the chair. A snowstorm was raging, and it happened to be the night of the annual Burns celebration, so the audience was not as large as it might have been. There was a capital meeting, and a very sympathetic one, the next night at Paisley; and another on the following evening at Greenock. The tour concluded with a visit on Thursday evening to Motherwell. Opposition, at least to Mr. Foote, seems to have died away at these places. However, the audiences have become more sympathetic, they contribute more to the collection, and they purchase more literature at the bookstall. These are better signs than silly "discussion" by orthodox ignoramuses.

Mr. Thomas MacLeish, Mr. D. Black, and Mr. T. Robertson are very earnest in this propagandist work under the Lecture Scheme. One or more of them, sometimes all, accompany the lecturer from Glasgow, and assist in the business arrangements. It is impossible to speak too highly of the zeal they display. This is what our movement wants. Work is bound to bear fruit; it is harder than grumbling, but then it does infinitely more good.

Mr. Cohen goes over the same ground in the Glasgow district next week, and Mr. Watts at the end of the month. Mr. Foote's Lecture Scheme is responsible for the lecturers' expenses. All the local friends have to do is to pay for the hall and any necessary advertising, in which they are assisted by the collection.

Mr. Foote lectured at Liverpool on his way home from Scotland. The uncomfortable wet weather was calculated to keep elderly and delicate people and ladies indoors. The audiences were therefore just a little below Mr. Foote's average at Liverpool. But there was no lack of enthusiasm, especially at the evening meeting. To-day (February 7) Mr. Foote delivers three lectures in the Secular Hall, Manchester.

Despite the wretched weather last Sunday, Mr. Charles Watts had a good audience at the Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, when he lectured in the evening upon "The Jewish Religion." Captain Cross presided.

Mr. Watts again lectures at the Athenæum Hall this evening, Sunday, February 7, taking for his subject "The Government and the Educational Problem." Captain R. C. Adams, late president of the Canadian Secular Union, will take the chair. The Captain is over here on a visit, and we hope he will receive a hearty reception this Sunday evening. He is the leading Secular exponent in Canada.

Colonel Ingersoll was evidently not exaggerating when he told Mr. Foote that he had "fully recovered." We see by the *Truthseeker* (New York) that he was announced to speak at Boston on January 24, and shortly after at New York. By the way, the *Truthseeker* reproduces both Mr. Foote's and Mr. Watts's tributes to the memory of Samuel Putnam.

We are pleased to see that the Secular League at Washington is very active in opposing the clericals who are trying to prevent newsboys from earning an honest living by selling papers on Sundays.

Mr. A. B. Moss is still active in the lecture field. He lectured on Sunday evening at Camberwell, to a very good audience, on "The Morals of Evolution."

The Glasgow "saints" held a very successful social on the 31st ult. in commemoration of Paine and Burns. Short addresses were delivered by Messrs. Strathearn, Black, and

MacLeish, and a good program of vocal and instrumental music was gone through.

Arrangements have been made for Mr. Cohen to lecture at Law, near Carlisle, on Thursday, the 11th. There are many Freethinkers in the district, who should make a point of assisting at the breaking of new ground.

Mrs. Mona Caird contributes to the February number of the *South Place Magazine* a memoir of the late Mathilde Blind.

The February number of the *Free Review*, which, we see, is going to change its title to that of the *University Magazine and Free Review*, and be published by the University Press, 16 John-street, Bedford-row, opens with a paper by Mr. F. Verinder on "The Blasphemy Laws." Mr. Verinder holds that the mere presence on the statute-book of laws under which, in the words of Justice Stephen, "it is an offence for any person brought up as a Christian to deny the truth of Christianity, however respectfully," is a national disgrace. Mr. Verinder writes with knowledge and fairness on the *Freethinker* case, and quotes with effect from Professor Hunter's able pamphlet. Mr. Robertson follows with a paper on "The Tory Religion," dealing especially with Mr. Balfour's *Foundations of Belief*. W. F. Sparrow writes on "The Influence of the Newspaper Press," and W. M. G. contributes a notable paper entitled "Are we Insane?" Dr. E. R. Grain writes on "Justice in England," instancing the cases of Mrs. Castle, Lady Scott and her accomplices, and others, as proof that there is one law for the rich and another for the poor. Major G. O. Warren reviews *The Real History of Money Island*, by Michael Flürscheim, under the title of "A Poor Book by a Rich Man."

The defenders of Christian missions have not come very well out of a discussion on their merits which has been occupying the pages of the *Lindsay and Lincolnshire Star*. Mr. J. Cherry, of Barrow, has pretty well pulverized them from the Freethought standpoint.

The *Torch of Reason*, the propagandist organ of the Secular Church of Oregon, reprints Mr. Foote's account of the work of that organisation, under the heading of "Good News from England."

"BEHOLD THE WONDERFUL WORKS OF THE LORD."

"I am come to send fire on the earth; but what will I do if it be already kindled?"—LUKE xii. 49.

I USED to do a little in the way of preaching, and sometimes would be puzzled to tell which out of the many texts to take as the basis of my discourse; but, as I was viewing the blackened ruins of two of the largest churches in our beautiful city, I felt like preaching again. Well, several texts suitable for the occasion came rushing into my mind, and I select three for my present purpose.

1. "Come and behold the works of the Lord, what desolation he hath made in the earth." Any man who could fail to make a good sermon out of such a text as that ought not to be dubbed D.D. Yes, verily, it is a sight more like that of a city after the visit of a conquering warrior who had revenged the wrongs his people had received at the hands of those who owned the beautiful places he had laid in ruins. If it had been an enemy that had done this, we would have put the police to hunt for the incendiary; but, when we find it to be, as David says, "thou, mine own peculiar friend," why, then our thoughts will take another direction. Now, these churches belonged to God; they were built purposely for him, and handed over to him in fee simple to avoid just taxation. Even now those ruined churches are claimed to be God's property. Well, is he not a vigilant night watchman? If, as is stated, he never slumbers nor sleeps, we may conclude that he saw when the fire first started. Why, then, if he is all-powerful, did he not prevent it destroying his own property? Oh, my Christian friend, it is of no use to say, "God permitted it for some wise end." It matters very little what end he had in view. The text is very plain when it says that God did it; but do the people really believe that he did it? Not at all. They say it was either accidental or the work of an incendiary. But the inspired word proves in many places that it is on account of the sins of the people that God brings ruin and destruction. Are the members of these churches sinners who deserve punishment?

2. "Come and see the works of God; he is terrible in his doings towards the children of men." It is not to be

wondered at that God should lay in ruins a few churches, if we remember how he has laid waste many great countries. You have read how he laid waste Egypt, probably the first nation known in history. He turned the whole nation into mourning one night; then he ordered all the nations of Canaan to be slaughtered in cold blood—men, women, and children to be exterminated without mercy; and then, because they were not strong enough to carry out the infernal purpose, but lived on terms of amity with the peoples they could not subdue, he became mad, and drove them all into slavery. What, I ask, is the burning of a few churches in comparison with the destruction of whole nations?

3. Then, thirdly, well may the people cry: "O God, why hast thou cast us off for ever; why doth thine anger make against the sheep of the pasture?" Why is all this desolation brought upon those who have often denied themselves many little comforts, and who with cheerful hearts have given their hard-earned dollars to build or beautify God's house? It is but reasonable that some cause should be shown. We have seen the ruinous effects. Let us examine ourselves and our conduct, and if we find we have been the cause of the destruction, let us humble ourselves and do better in the future. But if we cannot find the cause to be in the people, then we must own that there is only one way by which it can be accounted for, and that is, that it is God's own peculiar way of showing his love for his favored ones. For "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth," and scourgeth them to make them love him all the more. Strange, yet so saith the Scriptures. It was stated that one of the Brooklyn Tabernacle trustees thanked God for burning it down, because they got the insurance money. Now, as it is said that our two burnt churches are to be rebuilt, I would strongly advise that they be heavily insured, and God will thus have a good opportunity of really favoring his people, while appearing to chastize them; for we cannot suppose that he will protect his own people's churches in the future better than in the past.

—*Secular Thought*.

EDWARD PANTON.

HE PRAYED FOR THE WRONG LEG.

ONE day Jamie was going into Machera Fair with his ass and cart to sell dishes; and, just before entering the town, who should meet him but Father Gleeson and Peter Tomolty, the shoemaker. Peter, seeing the bad limp Jamie had, kindly inquired what he had done to get cured, when Jamie confessed he had been at half the doctors in Ireland, and all to no purpose, for they had declared his a hopeless case. Says Peter: "Have you tried the clergy?" "I have not," says Jamie. "Troth," says Peter, "and you never had such a chance in your life, for here is Father Gleeson, that has performed more cures than all the priests in Ireland; and there's more grace and mercy in a nod of his head than you would get in the body of a bishop. If you have no objections, I'll ask his reverence to do all he can for you." "With all my heart," says Jamie, "and if he stretches this leg the length of the other, it's myself that will pay him handsomely for it." So Jamie stopped the beast at the first public-house, and in they all went; and as Peter and his reverence had been teetotal all morning, it was not a hard job to advise them to take share of half-a-pint of Dunville's. So his reverence began to prepare Jamie by asking: "Have you any money on you, Jamie?" Jamie: "It wouldn't fatten your reverence all I have." His reverence: "Out with it, if it's only a fourpenny piece; for you know he that works at the altar must live by the altar." So Jamie pulled the foot of an old stocking out, with three half-crowns in it, and handed it to his reverence. His reverence: "Well, Jamie, do you think now that you have any faith at all?" Jamie: "With God's help and yours, I think I have, your reverence." His reverence: "Well, then, go down on your knees, and say your prayers earnestly, and I'll try what I can do for you." So Jamie prayed in English, and his reverence prayed in Latin, while Peter cleared away the tables and chairs, and ordered another half-pint. At last, when his reverence thought the miracle had time to take place, he ordered Jamie to get up and walk to the other side of the room, for there could be no doubt he was all right now; and Jamie was of the same opinion, for he started with the greatest confidence; but the first step landed him right on the point of his nose, and Peter says he'll never forget the unearthly yell he gave as he looked up in Father Gleeson's face, and declared by all the saints in Ireland: "Your reverence has ruined me for life; for bad luck to me but you have prayed for the wrong leg, for the long one is at least three inches longer than when I lay down."

CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM.

MOSLEMS boast that their converts from Christianity fully equal or exceed those made from Islam. Certain it is that in Africa the Prophet of Arabia is extending his sway more rapidly than he of Palestine. Professor A. Socin was recently asked by the editor of the *Christliche Welt* to give his explanation of the non-success of Christianity with Moslems. He replied:—

"A type of religious thought which, like Islam, is an absolute and complete fixture in itself is naturally very difficult to influence. It is also hard to deny that the character of the Mohammedan religion is such as to satisfy the real wants of the Orientals, and to do so in a very skilful way; and that, under existing circumstances, this religion actually is the most natural religion for these people. It is such because it represents the principle of *absolute authority*. This is secured already by an adaptation of the old Jewish metaphysical conception of an absolute monotheism. Allah is the absolute ruler of the universe, and acts in the manner of an Oriental despot, doing what he wishes and because he wishes it. Men are merely his slaves, and of them he demands a slavish obedience and submission. Allah bestows the good and the bad, fortune and misfortune, in accordance with his own arbitrary will. He has his own court and his favorite courtiers. He is the idealized and deified Oriental potentate, and Islam comes natural to the Oriental type of mind and thought."

Professor Socin further remarked that "Mohammed has rejected Christian doctrines essential to the very elements and fundamentals of faith. Thus, his decided rejection of the divinity of Christ makes it impossible for the Mohammedan properly to appreciate the character and person of Jesus." This, it will be noticed, is as much a reflection on Christian Unitarians as on Moslems. With Professor Socin's view may be contrasted that of J. W. Gambier in last October's *Fortnightly Review*. He says:—

"The religion of Mohammed is perfectly suited to the Oriental. Nay, I will go farther, and say that it is infinitely better for him, infinitely more likely to produce peace and goodwill among the various creeds and races which make up the heterogeneous hordes that constitute the Ottoman Empire, than Christianity. When we talk of the horror of Mohammed's teaching, or only see the scimitar gleaming over the heads of his converts, we forget that for every man that perished by that weapon thousands have passed under the swords of contending sects of Christians, have been racked, burnt, murdered, and their homes laid waste."

The Bible Beginning.

Little of Genesis can be accepted as history. It must be regarded either as a combination and reflection of dim recollections of old tribal history or of later events. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are but the incorporated forms of the old tribes. There are several reasons why the account of the abode in Egypt and the Exodus cannot be regarded as historical facts, and one of them is the fact that in the Egyptian records that have thus far been discovered there is no reference to these occurrences, so that this portion of the Old Testament must be regarded as a reflection from a much later time—the history of a subsequent period incorporated into the book of Exodus. The tablets of Amarna, found ten years ago and inscribed about 1500 B.C., or before the time commonly assigned to the life of Moses, contain not a word of the Israelitish history as found in the earlier books of the Old Testament. Hence we have to dismiss these early accounts as the legendary, imaginary pictures of a past life reconstructed in the light of much later times.
—Professor C. Toy.

The Bible.

The real power of the Bible lies in its expressing the religious development of an entire nation. Here may be traced the evolution of a tribal fetish to the guardian spirit of clans claiming common descent; and that again, under the influence of vast monarchies, like the Egyptian, Babylonian, Persian, and Roman, broadening into claim of universal monarchy for the god. So with the evolution of society. Its prominent stages of pastoral life, agriculture, and commerce, of war, slavery, and polygamy, are there with indications of nobler ideals; and thus its elasticity, like a nose of wax, as Erasmus called it, makes it suitable to so many. To the anthropologist, its records, critically sifted, are of value; but it can no longer be deemed the pivot of the world's thought, any more than Jerusalem can be placed, as in the old maps, as the centre of the world, the hub of the universe.—"Footsteps of the Past," p. 87.

THE SOUL AT THE GATE OF HEAVEN; OR, JUSTICE JAHVEH'S JUDGMENT.

THE Lord Justice Jahveh was sitting in state,
In his Court in the golden-paved street;
And stationed on guard at the principal gate
Was the Saint, piscatorial Pete.

The soul of John Brown, who had recently died,
Flew away to those Realms of the Blest.
"Pray, open the gate, Mr. Peter," it cried—
But old Peter was calmly at rest!

It lifted the knocker, and struck a loud blow,
And the pavement impatiently trod;
The noise woke the sleeper, who cried, "Half a mo'."
Then he shouted to Almighty God:

"Outside of the Palace a Soul loudly knocks;
Shall I open and let it inside?"
"No, no; wait a bit," said the crafty old fox,
"For perhaps it has got to be fried."

"What ho! there, Recorder, thou son of a gun,
Find its name in thy ponderous tome;
And tell me its creed, and each deed it has done,
In its far-off terrestrial home."

The learned Recorder got down from his perch,
And he hastened to God with the book;
He opened the volume, and started to search
For the name of that spirit, or spook.

"I've found it, your Lordship," he murmured at last,
And he hurriedly scanned the Report;
Then all of a sudden he started, aghast!
"What is up?" said the Boss of the Court.

"I find," said the learned Recorder, "this man,
While alive, was an infamous wretch;
Recite all his crimes I'll be hanged if I can,
It would take seven years at a stretch."

"A few I will mention—he swindled and thieved,
And committed a murder as well";
Said Jahveh: "To hear it I'm certainly grieved
More than words in our language can tell."

"But surely," said he, "one good point you can find
In his character—pass me the Book."
(Of course the Lord merely said this as a blind,
For he'd ordained the fate of that spook!)

The Lord took the volume, and turned to the end
Of the learned Recorder's Report;
"Ha! ha!" said Jehovah, "I thought so, my friend;
Why, this chap is just one of my sort."

"I find he believed in the 'One Crucified,'
In the paths of the pious he trod;
Come, open the gate, Peter, open it wide—
You can give him a harp," said God.

ESS JAY BEE.

Miracles.

Of all the modes of evidence which ever were invented to obtain belief to any system or opinion to which the name of religion has been given, that of miracle, however successful the imposition may have been, is the most inconsistent. For, in the first place, whenever recourse is had to show for the purpose of procuring that belief (for a miracle, under any idea of the word, is a show), it implies a lameness or a weakness in the doctrine which is preached. And, in the second place, it is degrading the Almighty into the character of a showman, playing tricks to amuse and to make the people stare and wonder. It is also the most equivocal sort of evidence which can be set up; for the belief is not to depend upon the thing called a miracle, but upon the credit of the reporter who says that he saw it; and, therefore, the thing, were it true, would have no better chance of being believed than if it were a lie.—*Thomas Paine*.

Jahveh and Jesus.

While, however, there is an enormous improvement if we compare the administration of human affairs by Jehovah (*i.e.*, the Old Testament God) and by God (*i.e.*, the God of the New Testament), there is nevertheless a blot upon the character of God (*i.e.*, the God of the New Testament) which suffices, if rigorously balanced against the failings of Jehovah, to outweigh them all. It is the eternity of the punishment which he inflicts in a future life. No amount of sophistry can ever justify the creation of beings whose lives are to terminate in endless suffering.—*Viscount Amberley*, "Analysis of Religious Belief," vol. ii., p. 371.

THE ARITHMETIC OF ANIMALS.

A RUSSIAN doctor named Timofieff has devoted much time to the counting capacity of animals. He declares that the crow is capable of counting as far as ten, and is in that respect superior to many tribes of men in Polynesia, who comprehend hardly anything of arithmetic. Dr. Timofieff's own dog never buried several bones in one spot, but always hid each one away separately. One day his master presented him with twenty-six large bones, which he immediately proceeded to bury in twenty-six different places. On the morrow Dr. Timofieff did not feed the animal at all. In the afternoon he let him into the garden, and watched him from a window. The dog set to work at once, and dug up ten of the bones. Then he stopped, seemed to reflect for a minute, and began digging again until he had found nine others. Here he stopped to consider as before, and then returned to work, scratching perseveringly until he had unearthed six more bones. This seemed to satisfy him; he sat down and began his dinner. Suddenly he raised his head, stopped eating, and looked around with a thoughtful air. Then, as if quite sure that he had forgotten something, he started up, trotted round the garden, found the twenty-sixth bone, and returned, with a look of satisfaction, to his meal. The doctor believed that the number twenty-six was too much for the canine mind to grasp, and that the dog had therefore divided the provender into three groups, counting the bones in each lot separately; but that the mental process was so complicated that he had made a miscalculation, and rectified it only after prolonged reflection.

The same writer tells us that the cat is less expert in arithmetic than the dog, not being capable of counting farther than six. He used to hold a piece of meat to his cat's nose and draw it away suddenly, always repeating the action five times before allowing the animal to take the morsel. Puss soon grew accustomed to the performance, and waited with dignity and calmness until the sixth offer was made, when she sprang up and seized the piece of meat with her teeth.

For some weeks the doctor repeated this experiment, and the cat did not make a single mistake. When, however, he tried to increase her knowledge by making four more approaches and retreats before letting her take the meat, she lost the count completely, and jumped at the wrong moment.

Proofs of the horse's power of counting are even more curious. Dr. Timofieff mentions a peasant's horse which, when ploughing, invariably stopped to rest after the twentieth furrow. It did not matter how long the field happened to be, nor how tired the animal might feel; it never stopped until the twentieth furrow had been made, and so exact was the count that the farmer could tell the number of furrows by noting how many times the horse halted.

The Ne Plus Ultra of Wickedness.

John Stuart Mill, describing his father's and his own anti-religious opinions, writes as follows: "I have a hundred times heard him say that all ages and nations have represented their Gods as wicked, in a constantly increasing progression; that mankind have gone on, adding trait after trait, till they reached the most perfect conception of wickedness that the human mind can devise, and have called this 'God,' and prostrated themselves before it. The *ne plus ultra* of wickedness he considered to be embodied in what is commonly presented to mankind as the creed of Christianity. Think (he used to say) of a being who could make a hell," etc. And then J. S. Mill goes on: "The time, I believe, is drawing near when this dreadful conception of an object of worship will no longer be identified with Christianity, and when all persons with any sense of moral good and evil will look upon it with the same indignation with which my father regarded it."—*Autobiography*, p. 41.

The universal idea of the interposition of a personal agency in the most common concerns of every-day life, and the most ordinary natural processes inherited by the European, has become gradually discarded. As science by successive efforts explains the sequence and changes in natural phenomena, so mysterious to ignorance, the idea of personal agency becomes gradually eliminated, and driven further beyond the region of direct observation and experience. And, as it escapes ordinary attention, the idea of a supernaturalism gradually fades from the recollection, and ceases materially to influence conduct.—*Westminster Review*.

It is idle to attribute the destruction of superstition to the Reformation. Protestants were as superstitious as Catholics.—*Henry Thomas Buckle*, "*Miscellaneous Works*," vol. i., p. 419.

The true heroes of life are often to be found among those on whose fearless advocacy of what they believe the world is making social war.—*Lord Bowen*.

POGGIO AND TACITUS.

(See p. 66.)

My good friend, Mr. Forder, has pointed out to me that there is much evidence in *The Life of Poggio Bracciolini*, by the Rev. William Shepherd, first published in 1802, before there was any suspicion of Poggio being a forger, that he was engaged in some such business. Poggio's correspondence shows that between 1422 and 1423 he was hesitating between a professorship and some literary enterprise. He finally decided upon the latter as more profitable. For this work he required all ancient histories, geographies, etc. Moreover, he was particularly anxious to get an MS. of Tacitus in Lombardic letters, and to get into communication with a skilful copyist. There is enough mystery to suggest that he was engaged on a magnificent forgery, and the mystery recurs at the time when the fragment containing the latter half of the *Annals* was on the point of being sold.

A likeness may, moreover, be drawn between the known character of Poggio and that revealed in the *Annals*. Poggio, like Swift, was inspired by his antipathies. He excels in abuse, and sees evil everywhere. Satire and detraction come natural to him. He thinks virtue has no choice save retirement or martyrdom. He despised men as easily deceived, and hated learned rivals like Filelfo and Valla with vindictive malice. There is, moreover, a love of indecency seen in Poggio's *Facetia*, and in the stories of Sabina Poppæa, Messalina, Silius, and the feasts of Nero. In all this the hand of the Italian, and not of the Roman, is observed. The author of *Agricola and Germania* was a man of entirely different stamp.

The author of *Tacitus and Bracciolini* was John Wilson Ross; and, though his case is perhaps weakened by a multitude of questionable details, the work deserves more examination than it has yet received. The same may be said of the work by M. Hochart. This scholar first discovered, by his study of the *Life of Seneca* (*Etudes sur la vie de Seneca*), that the condition of things in Rome at the time of Nero was quite other than that represented in the *Annals*—for one thing, that the philosophical schools inspired a public opinion which was by no means without influence. Any such atrocities as those ascribed to Nero in his dealings with Christians would have created a strong feeling, but we find that his popularity was undiminished. It must be allowed that the author of the *Annals*, whoever he was, was a great man. If historic fiction, it is not to be put on a level with *Ben Hur*, but rather with *Quentin Durward*, and it embodies a deal of actual history. J. M. W.

Obituary.

A WELL-KNOWN and much-respected worker in the Free-thought cause has departed in the person of John Edwin Brumage, who died at Hastings on Thursday, January 28, after much illness and prostration. Mr. Brumage was born near Devonport on February 10, 1831, and was brought up as a shipwright. At Pembroke he heard from the pulpit of "the Atheist Tom Paine," which led him to read Paine's works for himself, with the usual result. With Mr. T. Dunbar Harris, a Freethinker still living, he started the first Mechanics' Institute at Pembroke. Removing to Woolwich, in 1853, he became the centre of a groupe of reformers, engaging halls for lecturers like Mr. Bradlaugh, Mr. Holyoake, and Mrs. Law. He was active, too, in aid of Garibaldi and Mazzini, and helped to form a local library for Freethinkers. At Woolwich Mr. Brumage occupied the position of Inspector of Naval Shipwrights, and in 1869 he was made foreman of the entire stores at Portsmouth Dockyard, a position of great responsibility, which he held until his retirement in 1891. Throughout his career he was a warm supporter of Mr. Bradlaugh, who, when visiting Portsmouth, made his house his home. Many other lecturers, and the present writer, have often partaken of the hospitality of Mr. Brumage and his good wife. Mr. Brumage never concealed his opinions, and his sturdy honesty gained him the respect of all who knew him. In 1889 he was placed on the Portsmouth School Board by 8,000 votes, without any personal canvassing. He was a vice-president of the National Secular Society, and upon coming to London after his retirement was made a member of the Organisation Committee. Of a generous, sensitive disposition, Mr. Brumage was manly and straightforward in thought, word, and deed. Benevolence beamed from his ever kindly face. Personally, I feel it an honor to have had the intimate friendship of such a man. When with him and Mrs. Brumage just a week before his death we spoke of the reported recantation of our mutual friend, "Toby King." I said that, as with Mr. Bradlaugh, I was sure that his Free-thought views would give him the least concern. He agreed, and the way in which he smiled showed this was a faithful reflection of his own views. In his last days Mr. Brumage had every attention that loving care could give, and he passed away peacefully. J. M. WHEELER.

BOOK CHAT.

MANY years ago the Rev. William Denton used to meet a gentleman at the British Museum searching diligently folios of the Fathers and other ancient books. "May I ask you," said Mr. Denton one day, "what work you are engaged in bringing out?" "I!" was the reply; "don't you know who I am? I am Spurgeon's man engaged in looking out stories for him in books not generally read or familiar to the public."

The writer of "The Red Page" in the *Bulletin*, of Sydney, has a fresh, breezy style and original thoughts. He contends humorously that literature is made on physiological principles, and that a family doctor—who can point to one page and say, "Scrofula!" to another, "Eupepsia!" and to a third, "Phthisis!"—should be easily the best of literary critics. He has even invented some words using "se" when either "she" or "he" is implied, and "sis" for "her" or "his."

This critic has been dealing with Mr. Clement Shorter's *Charlotte Brontë and Her Circle*, without gloves. The book is issued by the religious publishing house of Hodder and Stoughton, which is the recognized print-vehicle of parsons from "Ian Maclaren" downwards, and which issues a monthly magazine, the *Bookman*, edited by Dr. Nicoll, a Scotch ex-parson, to the main end of booming the publications of the firm and its parson-allies and evangelical acquaintances. The *Bookman* began well, with a show of independence; but latterly the twang of devotion to piety and the publishers—or the publishers and piety—has sent it into the regions of literary discredit, where Gladstone roareth, and the Nonconformist conscience mourneth for its first-born.

The critic notes that Mr. Shorter's whitewash does not even begin to make a white mark on the Rev. Patrick Brontë, who virtually murdered his wife. He says: "After producing six children in seven years, the poor tortured wretch died horribly of cancer supervening on physical exhaustion. In the intervals of her child-bearing, the Rev. Patrick Brontë threw the babies' colored shoes on the fire in a fit of temper, or cut her silk dress into shreds; or, when he was in a worse rage than usual, took to firing off the pistol which night and day he kept constantly by him. 'Coldness, neglect, tyranny, cruelty,' are Wemyss Reid's words for the conduct of the master: 'habitual dread' his phrase for the attitude of the slave. And the clerical brute actually upbraided her for having so many children! If the poor creature had turned and shot the Rev. Patrick Brontë with his own pistol, she would have done rather less than her duty to herself and her children and humanity. But she was only a woman, alas!—patient and uncomplaining; and, as she fades lingeringly out of existence, in the agony of her cancer, we hear her asking gently now and again to be lifted up in bed that she might watch the nurse cleaning the grate—'because you clean it as we used to clean it in my old home in Cornwall.' One feels keenly the want of faith in God in circumstances like these. It would be such a consolation to believe in a deity who would toast the Rev. Patrick Brontë." Charlotte Brontë is declared to have been, "like her mother, a martyr to her sex."

Dr. Nicoll, of the *Bookman* and *British Weekly*, who is ever grubbing in ecstasy among the "Kailyard runts," finds in Rudyard Kipling "no ear for the clash of spiritual armies," whatever that may mean. It comes natural to a clerically-trained Scotsman to think concern for humanity a waste of energy. Nicoll even finds Kipling "tiresome." Let him read again his recent stanzas on "The Bell Buoy":—

They christened my brother of old—
And a saintly name he bears—
They gave him his place to hold
At the head of the belfry stairs,
Where the minster-tower stand
And the breeding kestrels cry.
Would I change with my brother a leaguo inland?
(Shoal! 'Ware Shoal!) Not I!
There was never a priest to pray,
There was never a hand to toll,
When they made me guard o' the bay,
And moored me over the shoal.
I rock and I reel and I roll—
My four great hammers ply—
Could I speak or be still at the Church's will?
(Shoal! 'Ware Shoal!) Not I.

It may not be generally known that it was not until the year 1835, when a new edition of the Catalogue of Prohibited Books appeared, that the five works by Galileo, in which the revolution of the earth round the sun and her rotation on her own axis were maintained, were expunged from the list in the "Index Expurgatorius"!

Mr. Grant Allen has written an important study of the origin of religion, which he has entitled *The Evolution of God*. It will be published by the new firm of Grant Richards and Co., who issue Mr. Clodd's *Pioneers of Evolution*.

The University Press (Limited) announce as just ready an important book, on *Pseudo-Philosophy at the End of the Nineteenth Century*, being a review of "An Irrationalist Trio"—Kidd, Drummond, and Balfour, by Hugh Mortimer Cecil. The preface states that the object of the volume is to show how these three modern champions of theology have fared in their attempts to capture the scientific fortress by the use of pseudo-scientific methods.

We have not seen part 1 of *Annals of Toil*, by Morrison Davidson (London: William Reeves, 185 Fleet-street; 1s.); but part 2 is an interesting account of important episodes in the real history of the people of England, from the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 to the death of Lilburne the Leveller in 1649, dealing, of course, with the Rebellion of Cade, Protestantism and Pauperism, Ketts' Rebellion, the Plunder of Trade Guilds, etc. Mr. Davidson's view of Cromwell as a "Liberticide" and "piously unscrupulous Man of Blood and Iron" does not commend itself to us, though we sympathize with his fervent and effective pleading for the cause of the poor and the oppressed. A third part will conclude the useful series.

PROFANE JOKES.

THE minister preached from the familiar theme, "Many are called, but few are chosen." The youthful son and heir, who had had instilled into his mind the importance of remembering texts, announced it, with some dignity, at the Sunday afternoon dinner-table as follows: "Many are cold, but few are frozen."

Rev. Dr. Primrose—"What made you stop praying for a bicycle?" Bobbie—"Cause I heard dad say I couldn't have one."

Rev. Dr. Primrose (who has been asked to stay to dinner—"Do you know, my boy, why I am going to say grace?" Little Johnnie—"It's because you're getting this dinner for nothing.")

Young man (holding up a string of brook trout)—"Parson, we've called to present these trout to you." Parson (a Presbyterian)—"They are beauties. Thank you, boys; thank you." Young Man—"But we should tell you that they were caught yesterday, Sunday." Parson—"Ah, well, I'll take them. The fish are not to blame."

In one of the rural districts a minister was invited to dine with a citizen who, though wealthy, furnished his table poorly. When they were seated the host said: "Times air mighty tight, parson, an' we ain't got nothing much ter set before you, but, sich as it is, you air welcome. Will you ask a blessing on what you see?" The parson, observing the scant repast, lifted up his voice and said: "Lord, make us thankful for what we see, and may we be able to find it when we reach for it. Let it not escape us, and prove a snare and a delusion. Amen."

Kind Shepherd—"You don't attend Sunday-school! Haven't you been taught to pray to your Father in heaven?" Little Liza (suspiciously)—"No. Muvver told us never to breave 'is name after 'e was 'ung."

Scene—Sunday-school. The Doxology is explained. Small Boy—"Teacher, 'ow do you spell that word?" Teacher—"Show me how you have written it." Result—"Dogs' Holiday."

An examiner asked a Bible-lesson class to tell him what was the chief difference between Elisha and Elijah. After a pause a little lad held up his hand, and said: "Please, sir, Elisha walked with God, but the carriage was sent for Elijah."

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

[Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.]

LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, C. Watts, "The Government and the Educational Problem."
BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 7.15, T. Parris, "Being Born Again"; 8.45, Special meeting of members.
CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30 A. Westcott, "Pasteur: His Work and its Results"—lantern illustrations.
EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Libra-road, Old Ford): 7, Felix Moscheles, "Felix Mendelssohn, the Musician and the Man."
KINGSLAND: 12, Meeting at Bradlaugh Club and Institute—"Work for the Coming Open-air Season."
LOUGHTON DEBATING SOCIETY, Public Hall, Loughton, Essex: Feb 9, at 7.45, F. J. Gould, "Moral Training without Theology."
NORTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY, Athenæum, Camden-road, N.W.: 7, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Religious Revolutions."
NORTH LONDON ETHICAL SUNDAY SCHOOL, Leighton Hall, Kentish Town: 11, Lesson by F. J. Gould. Children invited.
SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY, Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road: 11.15, Sunday-school. 7, Tom Mann, "Moral Progress and Material Prosperity."
WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "John Ruskin."
WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. ("Sun in Splendor," Portobello-road, Notting Hill Gate): February 9, at 9, Business meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, A lecture.
VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 8—weather permitting—H. P. Ward, "An Appeal to Christians."

COUNTRY.

BRISTOL BRANCH (Shepherd's Hall): 7, A discussion.
DERBY (Pollicott's Dining Rooms, Market-place): 7, A reading.
GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 11.30, 2.30, and 6.30, C. Cohen.
LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, A lecture.
LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, A discussion—"Weismannism."
MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): G. W. Foote—11, "Earth, Heaven, and Hell"; 3, "The New Woman's Bible"; 6.30, "Colonel Ingersoll and American Liberalism."
SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, "Manxland and its Beauties"—lantern illustrations and descriptive readings.
SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, Business meeting; 7.30, W. Bowie, "An Hour with the Microscope."

Lecturers' Engagements.

O. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—February 7, Glasgow.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, London, S.E.—February 21, Leicester; 28, Bradlaugh Club. March 7, New Brompton. April 4, m., Hyde Park; a., Harrow-road; e., Hammersmith.

POSITIVISM.

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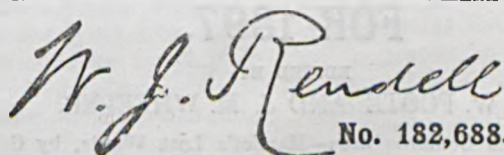
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